(c) The official level committee of Ministry of Finance on 1.5.2007 found the proposal to be in conformity of the VGF scheme and granted approval to GOAP to proceed with short-listing of bidders. GOAP has informed that the technical proposals submitted by the 5 pre-qualified international consortia companies are under evaluation.

(d) Since the project has not yet got the 'in-principle" approval of the Empowered Institution of the Ministry of Finance, it is too pre-mature to indicate the likely date for Government of India's approval of the proejct.

Stock of Titanium

† *120. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA: SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the 'Titanium' available in the country has been recognized by Government as atomic metals;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the annual production of this metal; and

(d) the amount of reserves of this metal estimated so for?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) No Sir, 'Titanium' is not recognized as 'Atomic Metal' by Government. However, Titanium bearing minerals and ores (ilmenite, rutile and leucoxene) are listed as 'Atomic Minerals' under entry No. 7 of Part 'B' of the First Schedule to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulations) Act, 1957.

(c) The total production of titanium bearing minerals during 2005-06 was 7,24,542 tonnes i.e. 7,04,243 tonnes of ilmenite and 20,299 tonnes of rutile. Presently no plant in India produces Titanium metal on commercial scale. However, a pilot plant of 3 ton per batch capacity exists at the Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL), Hyderabad.

(d) The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) over a period of more than five decades carried out survey and exploration for inland riverine/teri and beach sand placer deposits. AMD has established 461.37 million tonne of ilmenite, 26.82 million tonne of rutile and 16.07 million tonne of leucoxene. The ilmenite resource contains about 210 million tonne of Titanium Dioxide ($Ti0_2$) and rutile resource contains about 20 million tonne of $Ti0_2$. Put together this contains approximately 138 million tonne of Titanium metal.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Stock of Thorium

† 416. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an immense reserve of Thorium to fulfil the energy needs of the country, which can create adequate power base on nuclear technology;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.